

Sept. 7, 1960

Dear Mr. Smith,

Where are you and the rest of your Union Organizers? We need you over here. I wrote you a letter several weeks ago, explaining the situation in this area and asking your help. I received no answer whatsoever. If, only the workers in this area had leadership and someone to go to bat for them the wage standard here would go up, enough, at least, for a living wage.

Today, my family and I went out to a bean field where they had been picking for three days. At least, the Mexican Nationals had been picking. I asked to go to work and I was turned down, flat. I was told that if I wanted to work I could go to another field where the white workers were being hired. A field I knew had been picked over about seven times. I left the field and went to the Farm Labor Office and turned in a complaint. Two men from the office went back to the field with me and I was told I could go to work, after the men from the Farm Labor Office talked to the grower. We got the job through the efforts of the Farm Labor Office, but they can't do anything about the two and a half cents the grower was paying. If we want to work we work for that, or we don't work at all.

We discovered that before we got to the field and were turned down several people had been there before us and they went to the other field where there wasn't any beans, or not many anyway. They went to work there instead of turning the grower in to the F.L.O. So we drove over to that field and went up and down each row and told everyone there they could go to work at the place where the Nationals were working. Quite a few left and went over there.

Mr. Smith, we want to work, but we also want to make a living wage for our labor. Enough to support our families. The several million dollar grape crop is starting here in a few days and the pickers piece rate ranges all the way from 17¢ to 35¢ per box with no regard to the quantity of the grapes. Why the wide range in the pay scale? Is one winery's grapes worth more than this neighbor's down the road.

There are hundreds of people in this country up here waiting for a leader. We will all cooperate and try to better our way of life. And most of us are willing to work and work hard so we can hold our heads up and feel like, and educate our children so they can have the same chance of life as our contemporaries who hold down jobs in town and don't have to depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

Will you please help us get that chance? Please send us a leader.

Sincerely yours,

J.H. Scott  
(Petaluma Auto Court  
Petaluma, Calif.)